

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Requesting Decision

Adam Goodall, Project Manager

### Officer Making the Decision

Matthew Bradford, Head of Cleansing & Open Space

### Recommendation

That the Council undertakes the following changes to its Fees and Charges at Loughborough Cemetery to maximise the availability of burial space for residents of Loughborough with effect from the date that this delegated decision is signed.

1. Removes the option to pre-purchase exclusive rights of burial for 100 years at Loughborough Cemetery and;
2. Amends the charging structure for non-residents of Loughborough to a sliding scale of fees for interments.

### Reason

The revised charging structure has been established through careful consideration and is intended to maximise availability of burial space at Loughborough Cemetery by ensuring that all remaining space is used to fulfil current demand.

### Authority for Decision

Item 1 of the delegations to Heads of Service in section 8.3 of the Constitution gives authority to undertake the periodic review of fees and charges raised within their service areas and falling within the scope of the Council's Income and Charging Policy Framework. The Caninet Lead Member for Loughborough has also been consulted as part of the review process.

### Decision and Date



Matt Bradford, Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces  
8<sup>th</sup> February 2018

### Background

An audit carried out in March 2017, of burial space at Loughborough Cemetery concluded that the cemetery has approximately 5 years of burials space left,

and will be full to capacity by 2022. It is therefore recommended that the Council considers all options to ensure continuity of this sensitive service to its residents.

Whilst an alternative cemetery site is secured, the Council is implementing two changes to the current fees and charges.

### Exclusive Rights

Currently, exclusive rights of burial at Loughborough Cemetery are available. This allows the purchaser to choose who can be buried or scattered in the particular plot. The Exclusive rights of burial last for a period of 100 years. After this period the rights are renewed or the plot becomes the property of the Council who can then decide who will be buried there.

Stopping the pre-purchase of plots will ensure that potential burial space is not unnecessarily reserved and is available for immediate use when required. Anyone who currently holds the exclusive rights of burial for a plot at Loughborough Cemetery will not be affected by the proposed change.

### Non-Resident Charges

The Council currently charges non-residents of Loughborough exactly double that of residents for interments and exclusive rights of burials at Loughborough Cemetery. This is a long standing policy of the Council, reflecting the differing Council Tax charge demands borne by the respective Council Tax payers within the Charnwood Borough Council area. Expenditure towards the upkeep of Loughborough Cemetery is, by way of a special charge, borne exclusively by Loughborough Council Tax payers.

To ensure that residents who contribute towards the Loughborough Special Rate are recognised by an appropriate charge, the following sliding scale for interment fees is proposed:

- **Single Fees**  
Anyone living in the Loughborough Council Tax area at time of death. For residents living in care homes outside the area for less than twelve months prior to date of death, evidence must be provided by the Funeral Director / applicant to qualify for single fees e.g. Council Tax bill.
- **Double Fees**  
Anyone living elsewhere in the Borough of Charnwood at the time of death. For residents living in care homes outside the area for less than twelve months prior to date of death, evidence must be provided by the Funeral Director / applicant to qualify for double fees e.g. Council Tax bill.
- **Treble Fees**  
For all non-residents of the Borough of Charnwood.

## Financial Implications

For the period April 2016 to March 2017 income to the Council for burials and pre-purchase of graves at the Cemetery was £112,726 including £36,830 of income generated from non-residents paying double fees.

Based on 2016/17 figures, stopping the pre-purchase of burial plots for residents and non-residents will result in a reduction of annual income to the council of approximately £10,000. However, it is estimated that the new proposed sliding scale of double & treble fees for non-residents would offset any potential loss of revenue to the Council.

## Risk Management

*List risks in table below or state that 'No specific risks have been identified with this report'.*

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Resistance to price increases by clubs/customers	Possible	Moderate	Benchmarking with other local providers has been undertaken and the proposed charges reflect this local variance.

Key Decision:

No